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Save Money on Hospital Bills

According to the National Coalition on Health Care Costs and the American Hospital Association:

- Health care spending in the United States reached \$1.7 trillion in 2003 and was projected to reach \$1.8 trillion in 2004.
- Spending on health care has increased by 46% since 1998.
- Health care spending is 4.3 times spending on national defense.

Several factors contribute to this increase. According to the American Hospital Association, these factors include:

- Rising costs for goods and services hospitals need to provide care – This includes employee wages, benefits, drugs, medical devices, food, linens, and other supplies.
- Higher demand for care – Chronic diseases and an aging population are using more hospital services.
- Increased intensity of care – More sophisticated treatment options and older, frailer patients mean more complex care.

To combat the rising costs of health care, you should keep a close eye on your hospital bill. According to a recent MSN Money article:

- Estimates on hospital overcharges run up to \$10 billion a year.
- Overcharges make up approximately 5% of hospital bills.

The average overage is \$1,300 per hospital stay.

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